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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet examines what art can mean to a child with a disability and offers "how-to's" for involving students in the creation of art. It emphasizes that the outcome of an art activity can be more than just the finished piece of work and that emphasis should be placed on involvement with the materials rather than on design or abstract concepts that may get in the way of the self-discovery, learning, and individual expression that occur. The pamphlet discusses the value of arts and crafts in improving self-concept and confidence, developing motor and other skills, creating opportunities for social interaction and for self-discovery, improving problem solving and decision making, and assisting in sensory awareness. Suggestions are offered for work surface and materials adaptations. Several art and craft activities are then described, including dough art, printmaking and stamp art, edible art, necklaces, collages, tie dye, sack puppets, flying birds, and paper mache. The pamphlet concludes with a list of seven companies that provide arts and crafts equipment. (JDD)

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Art is For Everyone

No. 82

Art - Enjoy!

Have you ever really thought about art as to what it can mean to a child with a disability? We invite you to do just that with this REPEATER. Then look further for the "how-to" of involving your students or campers in the creation of their own joyous masterpieces.

Our guest editor, Kim Kavanagh, is completing a graduate program in Recreational Therapy at Michigan State University. A native of Perth, Australia, Kim combines her artistic talents with a great empathy and love for children.

Many of Kim's adaptations and suggestions were developed as she worked with the arts and crafts program at Indian Trails Camp in 1993. In her words, "The most noticeable effect I witnessed was that doing art made people smile, and they took great pride in what they were accomplishing. My art room had rules to make things run smoothly but my most important rule was...you have to have fun! But this didn't need to be a rule because it just happened."

Now you can make it happen for somebody else!

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ART IS FOR EVERYONE!

Art is one facet of life that we will never outgrow because it lends itself to individuals of any age, ability, or level of mastery. Not only that, but it is easily accessible to all, as it can be an inexpensive experience that you can enjoy almost anywhere with as few or as many supplies as you wish. A single pencil can create a masterpiece! From drawing with crayons to making a clay sculpture, or putting the finishing touches on an oil painting, ARTS and CRAFTS provide a basis for self-discovery, self-expression and creativity.

Doing ARTS and CRAFTS can be especially rewarding for children as it fulfills their need for self expression - the kind of expression where there is no right or wrong! The life of a child with a disability can be a lonely and frustrating one at times and art involvement can give them the gift of discovery and a voice for their feelings and thoughts. All children can enjoy this creative process and feel proud of every creation.

It is amazing what some markers, crayons, paper, paste and a child's imagination can produce. So, offer your child some materials and encouragement, sit back, and watch a masterpiece develop that reflects his or her individuality!

The outcome of an art activity can be more than just the finished piece of work. Art production is just one part of participating in ART and CRAFT activities. Emphasis should be placed on involvement with the materials rather than emphasizing design or abstract concepts that may get in the way of the self-discovery, learning and individual expression that occurs.

THE VALUE OF ARTS AND CRAFTS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Many needs of children with a wide range of disabilities can be, and are met through ART and CRAFT involvement.

The benefits received from ARTS and CRAFTS participation are not necessarily different for individuals with or without disabilities. However, art is a limitless, accessible body of experiences that, therefore, allows a multiplicity of avenues for individual participation without the limitations and barriers that apply in many other fields. Art also encourages individual responses to a given activity or situation which allows for special children to succeed at a variety of levels of expertise. Above all, and possibly the most rewarding aspect of involvement in ARTS and CRAFTS is that it is...FUN!

Through ARTS and CRAFTS, the benefits your child may experience can be: a sense of success; a sense of self; communication and self-expression; experiencing the joy of creation; self-actualization; challenge; introduction to productive use of leisure time; confidence; skill acquisition in both art and everyday living; sensory-awareness; attainment of self-integration and most importantly, a whole lot of FUN!

I have borrowed some thoughts on this subject from Frances E. Anderson, in Art for All the Children, Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois, (1978) and used some of my own to further explore the BENEFITS OF ARTS and CRAFTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES. Here goes...!

CONFIDENCE TO EXPRESS ONESELF AND IMPROVED SELF-CONCEPT THROUGH ART : The way children feel about themselves is a critical factor in their adjustment to life's stresses. Therefore, activities that can provide for successful participation and offer a chance to exert control of a given situation are especially important. ARTS and CRAFTS activities are ideally suited for both success and personal control because they are self-directed and there is no real right or wrong way of doing things. Art activities are non-competitive in nature and encourage individuality which means that there are no "losers" - only WINNERS!.. and participation in itself can be a measure of success. Self-confidence is improved once a child sees that they "*can do it*" and produce artwork that they can take pride in. It is important to give constant encouragement and praise to children for their work to reinforce the notion that each person has their own unique style and every completed item is a valuable work of art. Just putting a shaky stroke of paint on a piece of paper may be a major accomplishment for some children.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS THROUGH ART: Art can be used as a pleasurable learning experience and many activities included in art offer opportunities to improve art skills, gross and fine motor skills, daily living skills, leisure awareness skills, and educational skills. For example, painting and sculpting in clay can be used to strengthen muscles and improve motor skills. Through art forms, a child can also be helped to discriminate between colors, shapes and forms, with an example being making a colorful mobile out of geometric shapes. Furthermore, art may simply be undertaken to develop and define art related skills. For the child who has a disability, they may have large amounts of "free time" and have a difficult time finding things to do that are stimulating. We are cheating children of opportunities and a chance to grow and develop if we limit their activities to television and other passive activities that require little thought or imagination. There are unlimited experiences that can be listed as ARTS or CRAFTS activities, and by introducing a child to art you unlock the door to endless appropriate free time activities.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION THROUGH ART: Art can be easily conducted in groups and can act as an effective medium for facilitating communication and appropriate social behaviors. For example, there may be reinforcement of appropriate behavior in art such as appropriate use and care of materials, sharing with others, appropriate communication, how to make friends, or doing your share of the cleaning up. Group art provides opportunities to work co-operatively with others or simply provide artists with company, support and ideas. Art also offers great potential for socially integrating people with disabilities into the mainstream of society.

SELF-DISCOVERY THROUGH ART: Creativity, which is the cornerstone of ARTS and CRAFTS, requires that a child get in touch with his or her own personal feelings. Creativity in art is not necessarily limited to the act of developing an artistic creation but, in the words of Frances E. Anderson, "involves the capacity to be open to experiences, to welcome novelty, to be intrigued by discovery and to exercise new dimensions of imaginative thought." Art reflects an individual's inner being and images created can speak about a wide array of emotions and thoughts. You can, for example, give children a piece of paper divided into 4 squares and ask him or her to draw in one square how they see themselves, in another how they would like to look, in another what their favorite day would consist of, their favorite activity, food or toy etc., and in the final one their best friend (there are unlimited numbers of things you could chose to ask). What you will see tells you a great deal about these children and will make them think about themselves also. Encourage them to" tell you" about what they have drawn and why.

PROBLEM-SOLVING AND DECISION-MAKING THROUGH ART: ARTS and CRAFTS activities are essentially problem-solving processes because they include deciding how to complete a task. They involve making a number of choices such as what to make, which materials to use or what colors would look the best. Art is typically self-directed and can lead to self-discipline. For many children with disabilities who rely on others to accomplish many tasks in everyday living, art can give them the courage to make decisions for themselves and the confidence to do this in other areas as well.

ART AND SENSORY-AWARENESS: Art works in the area of sensory perception and therefore assists a child in developing sensory awareness, perception, judgement and sensory discrimination. For example, finger painting, textured paper, play dough and sponges can be used to create works of art for sensory awareness. A child can also use art to learn the relationship between size, shape and color and how to arrange things on paper. Art can also enhance hand-eye coordination.

ADAPTATION BECOMES THE KEY CONCEPT.

There is no recipe for art that gives precise measures or instructions on how to adapt a project for a particular disability. Adaptations may mean developing special equipment for an art experience, changing the art materials themselves to make them more accessible for a child or easier to use. It may even mean physically positioning the child so that he or she can become involved in the activity.

It is important that an ART and CRAFT activity be geared as much as possible to the skill level and personal needs of each young artist. Special materials and devices may be purchased, or simpler versions can be designed or substituted for those usually used in an activity. With the following considerations in mind and knowing the characteristics of the child you are working with, any ART or CRAFT activity can be adapted for the enjoyment and satisfaction of an interested artist.

Below are a number of **suggested adaptations** that you may find useful in conducting an ART and CRAFT session with a child. Many are easy "home made" devices. A list of suppliers can be found at the end of this REPEATER for those that you may wish to purchase.

WORK SURFACE :

* **Secure** paper to the desk for drawing or painting if your child has difficulty holding it in place. This may be done by taping or clamping the edges of the paper.

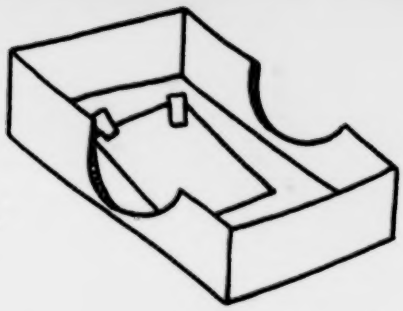
* You may need to **lower** the table or work suface for easier reach.

* Tables can be made or altered to allow children in wheelchairs **to get closer** to their work materials. An example is to make a semi-circular cut-out.

* Sometimes it may be easier to **work on the floor**. Children in wheelchairs who want to use their feet will find this easier. It can allow a larger working area to get creative on, and can be used for a group project to let everyone get close.

* An **easel** is handy in many cases. These can be small ones that attach to a table or large free-standing ones.

* **Rotate paper** to suit the drawing style of your artist.

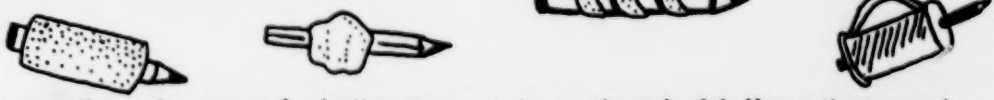


* For children with **limited hand control**, a simple guide can be made. Find an old box and cut semi-circular holes into the sides that will help your child hold his hand in place. Tape a sheet of paper in the center of the box and fasten it to the table with tape.

* A bean bag or angled wedge can act as a **support** for children working on the floor if they cannot sit up by themselves.

WORK MATERIALS :

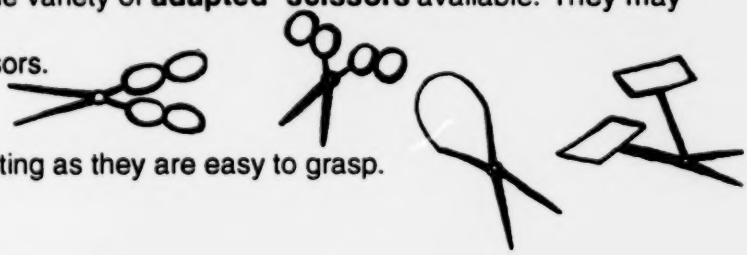
* Markers, crayons, paintbrushes and other handles can be made **larger** so that they are **easier to grasp**. Some easy solutions are to wrap tape around a handle; insert the end into a ball of plasticine or foam tubing. There are a large number of grips and handles available on the market also.



* Use thick pencils and crayons for better grasp or to produce **bold lines** that may be easier for a visually impaired child to see.

* Conversely, some people may have difficulty grasping large objects so **smaller** or **thinner** markers may be used.

* You will find that there are a wide variety of **adapted scissors** available. They may be easy to grip, self -opening, training scissors or table top scissors.

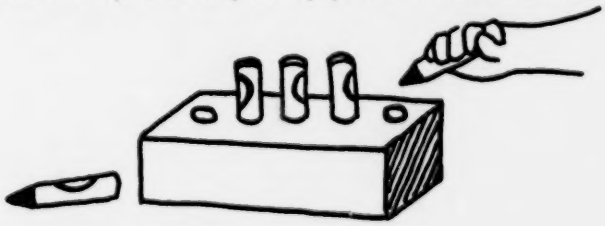


* **Sponges** are effective for painting as they are easy to grasp.

* **Tear** rather than cut paper.

* Use **cardboard or thick paper** in drawing and painting activities to avoid ripping.

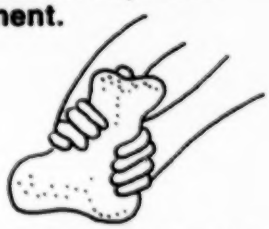
* A simple **pen holder** can be made to help a child pick up pens. A block of wood with holes drilled into it can have marker lids embedded into it.



* Use **watercolor** paints! Painting can be a very messy activity.

* **Coloring books** with bold outlines are good for low-vision children.

* Modeling clay, dough and plasticine are suitable mediums for almost anyone to explore **texture** and to increase **awareness of finger movement.**



* Always use **non-toxic** materials.

* Try using **chalk** on wet paper, black paper or sidewalks!

* Put paint, water and glue in **large dishes** that can be attatched or weighted to the work surface to **avoid spilling** and allow for easier access. A special dish can easily be constructed out of a milk carton. Cut a hole in the side large enough for a hand to fit through, weigh it down with gravel or rocks and fill with paint.

* Fill a shoe box with sand for building sand-castles.

* For children with low-vision, make a **reference-point** on their paper so that they can draw with one hand and use the other to find either the center or edges of their paper. This can be done by taping a coin or putting a small hole in the center of the paper, or attaching string or tape around the edge.

* In drawing activities it is easier for some children to recreate images that come from **direct experience**. This means that you may want to give them a picture book to look at or set up a still-life centerpiece with flowers or their favorite toys.

* Children with hyperactivity will no doubt complete tasks in a very short period of time. To slow them down try using construction paper to rip and glue to paste it down.

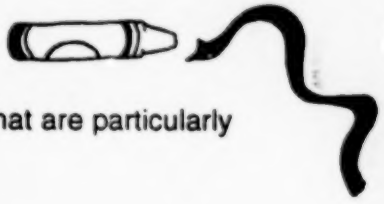
* A child may have **better control** if they put the marker, crayon or paint brush between their teeth. Special mouth pegs can also be purchased or constructed.

* Remember that it is important to find activities that your child can attempt by themselves. However, in the case that they are not physically able, offer assistance but still allow the child to direct you, for example by choosing the colors they want to use.

* Paint brushes, pencils, crayons and markers can be effectively attached to a helmet to allow a child with limited or no use of his or her arms to create a picture. Even a series of dots or strokes of color can represent a valuable work of art.

* Remember that **enthusiasm, encouragement and praise** are an important part of any art activity!

SOME ACTIVITIES TO TRY!

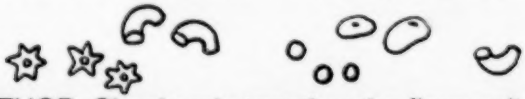


The following pages present some fun art projects to try at home that are particularly suitable for children but can be easily adapted for any age group.

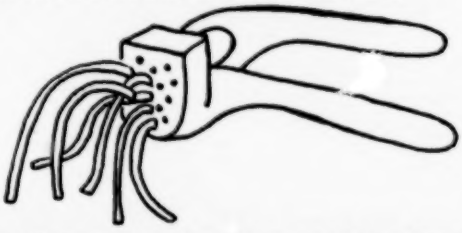
DOUGH ART

Dough is a good substitute for clay and can be made and baked in your own kitchen!

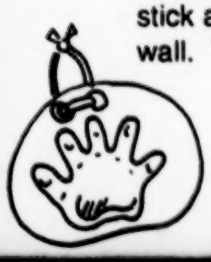
MATERIALS: 1 cup salt, 1 cup water, 3 cups plain flour, dish of water, food coloring, decorations (macaroni, cloves, dry beans), aluminum foil.



METHOD: Simply mix together the flour, salt and water and knead it until it is warm and soft. Then let your child squeeze, roll, poke, stretch, cut and mold it into any form he likes! You want to try not to make dough creations too thick because it will be hard to cook them all the way through. Finished products are then put on a cookie sheet covered with foil and placed in the oven (250 degrees) for about two hours or until rock hard and golden brown.

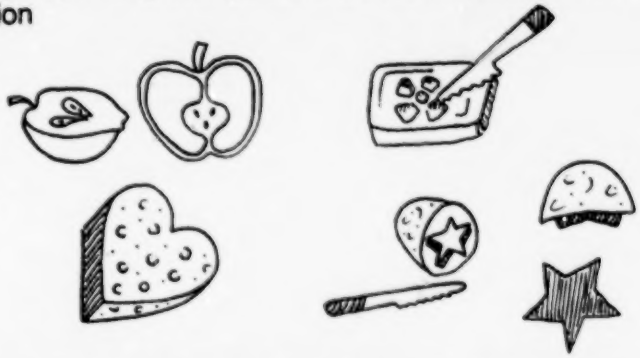


TRY: Adding food coloring to the dough or painting the dough once it has been cooked. Cookie cutters are a simple way to make shapes. A ball of dough can be rolled out on the table for your child to make an imprint of his hand. Before cooking, stick a piece of wire or a paper clip into the top if the dough so that it can be hung on a wall. Try putting dough into a garlic press and watch it make spaghetti-like hair!



PRINTMAKING AND STAMP ART

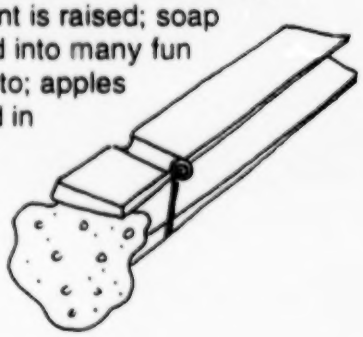
This activity is very entertaining for children in all disability groups and offers a great deal of variety in the types of patterns you can create. Materials are all easy to find in the kitchen or the garden and easy to grasp. Many stamps have different textures that provide pleasurable sensory stimulation



MATERIALS: many sheets of paper,
tempera paint,
dishes for paint,
stamping materials e.g.,
vegetables,
fruit, soap,
plasticine.
knife, scissors.

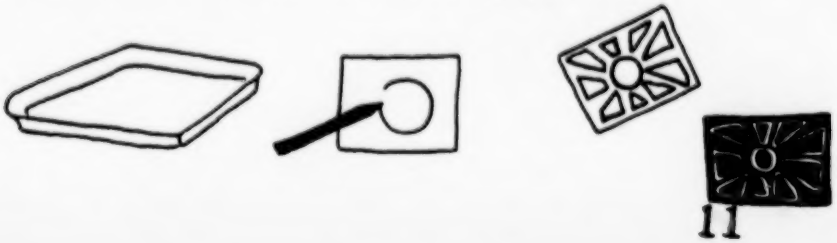
METHOD: To begin, you will want to put some newspaper down because this can be a messy activity! Place dishes of tempera paint on the work surface so that your child can reach them. Prepare the various stamps, dip them into the dishes of paint and press onto the paper. Remember to clean the stamps off before changing colors!

TRY: Some fun stamps to make are; sponges cut into any desired shape (stars, hearts, letters). Sponges can be clipped with a wooden clothespin to make them easier to hold; take half a potato and carve it so that the shape you want is raised; soap can also be carved into fairly easily; plasticine can be molded into many fun shapes and can be made so that there is a handle to grip on to; apples cut in half make heart shapes; corn on the cob can be dipped in paint and rolled across paper for an interesting effect.



Fingers also make fun designs!

Another simple but effective stamp can be made out of a styrofoam meat tray. Cut the tray into a 4" by 6" piece and make a design in it by pressing a pencil or pen firmly into it. Your child can make dots or lines in the styrofoam to create a design that can be painted and pressed onto a sheet of paper.



EDIBLE ART

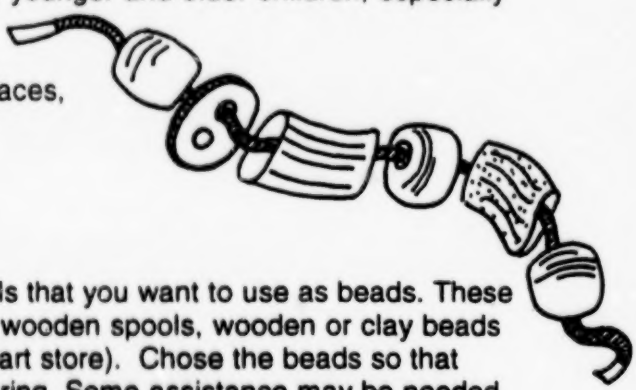
How about an activity that you can eat! This might be just the key for the hesitant artist.

MATERIALS: vanilla instant pudding,
food coloring, bowls,
shelf paper,
mixing spoon, apron.

METHOD: Prepare the instant pudding and place it into 3 separate bowls. You may add food coloring to create a number of colors. This works on the same principle as finger painting. Then give your child a large working space to design an edible work of art! The fun part is that if they get messy hands they can lick them clean!

MAKE A NECKLACE

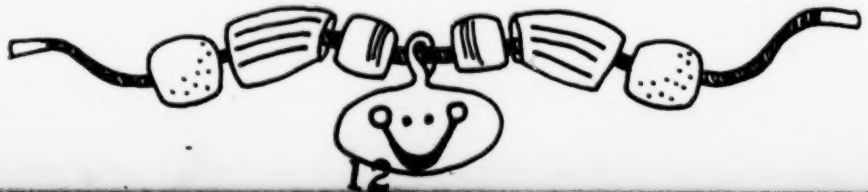
Making jewelry is an enjoyable project for both younger and older children, especially as they can wear the finished product.



MATERIALS: Heavy duty thread, leather, shoelaces,
macaroni, paint, brushes,
newspaper, shellac.

METHOD: To begin with, gather up the materials that you want to use as beads. These can be anything from uncooked macaroni, old wooden spools, wooden or clay beads (can be purchased relatively cheaply from any art store). Chose the beads so that they are an appropriate size for your child to string. Some assistance may be needed here. Put paper down on the work surface, set up dishes of paint and decorate the macaroni by painting them different colors. Beads can be given a "shine" by painting them with shellac. Using a piece of leather, string or a shoelace, arrange and string beads to make a fun necklace. Remember to tie a knot in the end of the string so that the beads won't fall off! Another alternative is to tape one end of the string to the table.

TRY: Make individualized beads out of modeling clay that can be cooked in the oven. Your child may even create a pendant that can be strung from the center of the necklace.



COLLAGE

Create a picture by sticking a variety of things onto a piece of paper!

MATERIALS: glue, colored paper, magazines, buttons, scrap material, bottle tops, large sheet of paper, scissors, textured paper.

METHOD: By using any number of materials, simply cut (or tear) them into pieces and paste them down onto a sheet of paper. Some helpful glue tips are to squeeze glue into a dish and apply with a paintbrush, or use glue sticks which are less messy and easy to control.

TRY: making a nature collage by using leaves, bark, feathers and other things found in the garden.

TIE DYE

Create fabulous designs on fabric that can be displayed or worn to show off your talent!

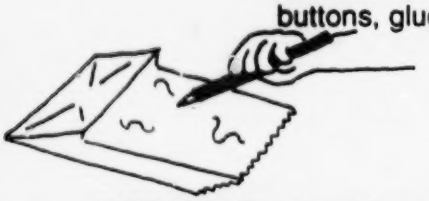
MATERIALS: packets of die liquid ,
rubber bands,
cotton fabric dyes the best,
buckets,
stirring stick.

METHOD: Make up the dyes and place each color in its own bucket. Then take the fabric and twist it into swirled patterns, placing rubber bands around it to keep it in place. Wet the whole thing with water first. Then place either the whole thing or just a corner onto one bucket of dye, Hold it there for about 3-5 minutes and then squeeze out the excess dye. Then you can place it into as many different colors as you wish. Place it in a plastic bag and let it sit for 24 hours. Take it out, remove the bands and rinse it in cold water. The final step is to wash it in a machine ALL BY ITSELF.

SACK PUPPETS

Sack puppets use household paper bags to make an art work that can be used to play with for hours later. This activity may require some supervision and assistance.

MATERIALS: brown lunch bag, markers, lids, buttons, glue, yarn.

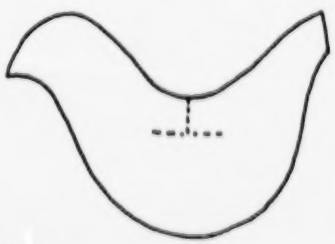


METHOD: The lunch bag will become the head and body of the puppet. Your child will either be able to put his hand into it to operate it or a stick can be attatched to the back for him to hold onto. A face can be drawn on with some added materials stuck to it also. It is not necessarily the goal to produce a puppet face that looks perfect because just controlling the pen to make marks may be a major achievement for a child. Yarn can be glued on the top to make hair. Arms and legs can be made out of paper and glued to the bag.

FLYING BIRDS

This is an activity that will keep your child entertained for hours because with this simple pattern he can make as many birds as he wants to fly in his room. It will also allow him to use his creative talents to make each bird unique in color or design.

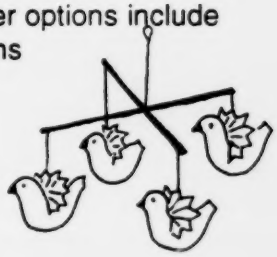
MATERIALS: Colored construction paper, 6" by 10" sheets of tissue paper (4 pieces per bird), scissors, markers, crayons, string or thread, clear tape.



METHOD: To begin with draw the outline of a bird and cut it out. This will become the pattern you will use. Let your child decide what color body or bodies he wants and cut out the chosen number of birds using the pattern. Cut along the dotted "T" as this is where the wings will go. Prepare a working space for your child and let him decorate to his heart's content. Use markers or crayons to make eyes and a beak and then whatever other materials you have to make a design on the body. Make sure that your child decorates both sides of the body because the bird will be seen from all angles when it is hanging.

The next step is to take four pieces of tissue paper and fold them accordian style with each fold about 1/2" wide. Slip the folded paper in the "T" slit in the body until it is half way through. Spread the paper out until it forms a fan over the bird. Join the two middle folds and attatch with a piece of clear tape. Make a hole in the taped section and thread string or thread through it for hanging.

TRY: You can make fancy birds by using glitter as a decoration. Other options include sticking sequins, buttons, pieces of fabric, or any other fun decorations you find around the house. Try making a bird mobile with two pieces of wood and four or five birds to hang from them.



PAPER MACHE'

This is a fun sculpting activity for the child who likes to get his hands dirty! Paper mache may require some extra guidance, as wet paper and paste can become very slippery. Also, using a balloon to make a ball shape can be a bit awkward for small hands to hold and attach paper at the same time. It can be used to make items like bowls, puppets, piggy banks or masks.

MATERIALS: newspaper, white paper or grocery bag strips, glue (wheat paste/ white glue and water combination/ or liquid starch), balloons, dishes for paste and paper, bucket, tempera paint, bowl.

METHOD: Gather up your paper and tear it into strips approximately 1 inch by 3 inches. Place glue mixture in a large dish or pan. Take the molding device you want to use (a balloon for an enclosed ball shape or a bowl for a bowl shape) and place layers of paper strips dipped in glue. The paper will take quite some time to dry but will eventually make a strong hard surface. Once dry it can be painted and holes can be cut out of it.

TRY: Placing a bowl upside down, cover it with vaseline and create a bowl of your own! Make a mask by covering half of a balloon with paper and cutting out eye holes. The cups from egg cartons can be mounted on the bottom of a balloon to make the frame for a 4 legged animal. Tissue paper adds a nice effect over white paper.

RESOURCES FOR ARTS AND CRAFTS EQUIPMENT

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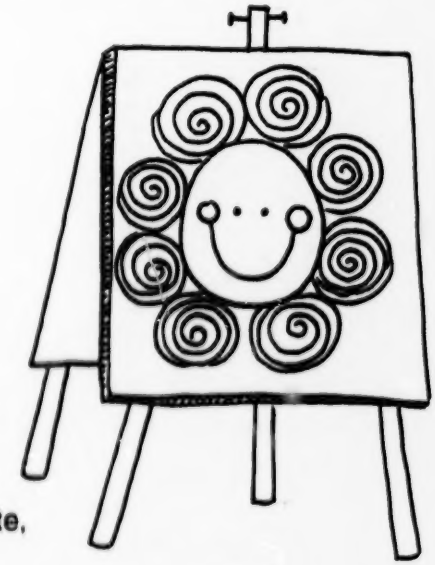

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